

A Life of Prayer

Coming God as our Father

Group Question - What are your difficulties in prayer? Hindrances/roadblocks?

- **Any ideas to combat these issues?**

Childlike Praying

Talking with our Father – what does this mean? How do we do it?

Notice words of Jesus to become like children:

Mark 10:14–15

But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Matthew 18:3

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

- Jesus loved Children, though it was unpopular at the time, he said “let them come” And that’s what he says about us, “let them come”

We, like good adults, try to fix ourselves up. In contrast, God wants us to come to him like little children, just as we are.

3 points on coming to him as we are:

1. **Come Messy** - be quick, be raw, don’t need to get it just right, just come

Matthew 11:25, 28-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children...²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle

and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- Don't try to get the prayer right; just tell God where you are and what's on your mind. That's what little children do.
- Notice heart of Jesus in Mt 11:29, Come to me!! Weary, burdened, like a banged up kid - wants to give us rest, reassurance, back in the game/fight.

2. Come Real - be authentic, be real with God, come as you are, sin and all!

Luke 15:1–2

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- God wants the real us! Knows we are not perfect! Jesus said that he came for sinners. He loved sinners, spent time, loved when they came to him with where they were at! Came for messed-up people who keep messing up. Come dirty, real...*Jesus this is who I am*
- Jesus didn't expect perfection from disciples, patient. *Example* Peter—after denied Jesus 3x...when Jesus sees him next **John 21**, provides fish, have breakfast together, reaffirms love/forgiveness, teaches him “feed my sheep” gives him new direction “follow me.”
- **Point** Don't have to fix ourselves up and be perfect before coming to God, dressed in our Sunday best to come to God, we just need to be ourselves. If we are struggling, we tell him, if we have sinned, we tell him. **1 Jn 1:9** – if we confess our sins... faithful, cleanse us, forgive.

3. Come to God as Our Father

- **Lord's Prayer, Mt. 6:9** What are opening 2 words? “Our Father.”
- See the heart of God! God wants us to come to him as his children – real, needy, desperate, trusting, looking for reassurance, looking for direction.
- God welcomes this! Paul Miller says, *“If you remove prayer from the welcoming heart of God...prayer becomes a legalistic chore.”*
- *Reminder:* God loves us as a Father, he wants us to pray, he welcomes us in, he loves it when we simply come!
- **Is 40:11**... *he tends his flock...gathers... carries close to heart*

Talking with Our Father (practical ideas)

What does it mean to talk with our Father as children?

- **Ask like a child**

Matthew 7:7–11

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

- Children ask for anything and everything, whatever is on their mind...
- **Point:** if we earthly parents, with all our brokenness, still give our kids good gifts, won't our heavenly Father do even more?
- Our kid's requests, no matter how trivial, tug at our hearts. God feels the same.
- And so we come to our Father with all our needs, all desires, all hopes, all dreams.

- **Believe like a child**

- Little children believe their parents can do anything.
- Jesus loved it when people came to him in prayer with belief and great faith!

Belief examples, Jesus' stories of belief in prayer:

- Persistent widow in Lk 18:1-8
- Man who badgers neighbor Lk 11:5-8
- Instinctively children believe their parents what to do them good...if you learn to pray in this way, you learn to dream again, learning to ask big and boldly.
- Jesus loves prayer of faith and belief.

- **Talk like a child**

- God is a person, sometimes just have a conversation, our adult conversations can move all over the place.
- Consider Paul's prayers scattered through **Ephesians 1-3**. When your mind wanders in prayer, be like a child. Don't worry about being organized and on task. Paul certainly wasn't! Remember you are in conversation with a person.

- *Example:* two year olds, “get our your words, use your words”
- Sometimes need to get our words out and tell him where we are.
- **Point:** prayer is a relationship/conversation between a child and the don’t need to be all perfect and polished and sound good. God is our Father, **Galatians 4:6**, “*And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”*... when you do this, you’ll discover that prayer is a feast. It is enjoyable. It is more like a real life relationship.
- **Psalm 131**

¹ My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. ² But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. ³ O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

■ **Q: What is the attitude here? What are the results?**

(humility, knowing place, calm/quiet/content, hope)

- Weaning process can be difficult and challenging – but afterward, there is a greater maturity which can lead calmness/contentment.
- Sometimes we just need to get the clutter off our hearts and minds and come to God first with our concerns, thoughts, anxieties... when we do so, there is a humility and calmness that can set in, there is a hope again! This can bring focus to other types of prayer – thanksgiving, petition, etc.

Ideas on Organizing Prayers

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ● Binder method, tabs | ● Month Prayer Guide |
| ● Index Cards | ● Ask - answer list |
| ● List with major topics | ● Prayer app |
| ● 7 Day Prayer Guide | ● Others? |

Discussion Groups

1. Share your observations from your two 5 minute prayer times. What were the similarities or differences between the two?
2. What stands out to you as meaningful or important from this talk on prayer?
3. Based on what was taught, what do you hope to practically apply to your life?

SEVEN-DAY PRAYER GUIDE

Reminder Row	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Pattern for request	Our Father in Heaven	<i>Our Father, holy is your name</i>	<i>Our Father, your kingdom come</i>	<i>Our Father, your will done on earth as it is in heaven</i>	<i>Our Father, give us today our daily bread</i>	<i>Our Father, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors</i>	<i>Our Father, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil</i>
Priority for request	Sonship	Worship	Mission Evangelism	Mercy	Generosity Contentment	Unity Reconciliation	Warfare
Prayers for Passions of my heart (heart affections)							
Key Person							
Prayers for other People							
Pressing urgent requests							
Praise for answers to my prayers							